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ABSTRACT

Part-time faculty, who are often responsible for teaching at continuing education centers, places of work, and distant sites where full-time faculty do not teach, often have little understanding about how their course fits with other program offerings and have not been oriented by the faculty who designed the program. Given the growth of off-campus degree programs, the extensive use of part-time faculty throughout U.S. institutions, and the call by some accreditation associations for full-time faculty control of such programs, the need to redefine faculty workload to encompass this responsibility must be addressed. Institutions need to grapple with the concept of "service" as it is assessed in faculty workload, promotion, and tenure decisions. The University of La Verne (California) delivers degree programs to adult sites, military bases, and foreign-based centers. It has created a system of academic control that places responsibility for its academic programs in the hands of full-time faculty. These responsibilities are incorporated into the regular workload by replacing teaching assignments, by extending contracts to 12 months, or by a stipend payment. New faculty contracted positions have been created, including Faculty Liaison, Senior Lecturers, and Department Associates, to work with full-time faculty who act as Program Chairs and Subject Specialists. (JDD)

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EMPOWERING FACULTY TO MANAGE OFF-CAMPUS DEGREE PROGRAMS; REDEFINING FACULTY WORKLOADS AND SERVICE

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Most attempts at redefining or re-conceptualizing faculty work assignments focus on the three standard categories that have characterized workloads for decades: teaching, research, and service. But given the incredible growth of off-campus degree programs, the extensive use of part-time faculty throughout US institutions, and the call by some accreditation associations for full-time faculty control of such programs, the need to redefine faculty workload to encompass this responsibility must be addressed. For institutions which operate adult centers, service industry on-site, offer programs at US military bases, and/or have international programs, the need to empower its full-time faculty to manage its degree programs wherever they are delivered is an awesome, complex, and controversial responsibility. Should it be undertaken, it will redefine faculty workload by forcing institutions to grapple with the concept of "service" as it is assessed in workload, promotion, and tenure decisions.

Faculty workload has been under renewed scrutiny for the past five years following criticism that faculty taught too few courses and were more concerned with research than teaching. Both concerns had to be addressed during a time when budgets were shrinking. The Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education has funded a project by the American Association of Higher Education to study the problem. That study is in its second year. To date, however, little attention has been devoted, either in AAHE's Forum to study the issue or in the national debate, to the place and importance of part-time faculty or to full-time faculty supervision of the programs in which they teach.

There is need to put this problem into perspective. The societal makeup of the nation's college-going population is changing dramatically according to The College Board.(The Office of Adult Services, The College Board, 1991). Figures prepared by TCB point to a population in the year 2000 that will have close to 60%

over 30 years of age. "Demand for professional continuing education and certification programs among college-educated workers will persist..." (The College Board). Since there are currently over 14 million people taking college level study, it is obvious that the future need for on-going adult programming will continue. Only 20% of the college population is 18 to 22 years of age. It is the adult market that is and will continue to be the driving force for higher education in the future. The greater percentage of these adults take course work in the evening, on weekends, and/or at distant locations, including places of work.

According to projections made by the US Department of Education, there is slightly in excess of 400,000 full-time faculty teaching in US institutions nationwide. But there are in excess of 350,000 part-time faculty teaching.(The Conditions of Education, 1985, US Department of Education). Add to this number of PTF the numbers of graduate students teaching as Assistants, a number at the University of California at Berkeley that, when on strike, shut down over 60% of the undergraduate classes, and the role of the non-regular faculty responsible for teaching becomes staggering.

Of what importance is this fact? Generally speaking, recognizing many instances where the reverse is true, most PTF have little or no contact with FTF and, consequently, little or no direction regarding the programs in which they teach. While some studies (See bibliography Attached) have demonstrated that the teaching effectiveness of PTF is generally comparable to FTF, those same studies demonstrate that these faculty know little about the institution for which they teach, have little understanding about how their course fits with others required in the program, have not been oriented by the FTF who designed the degree or program in the goals or objectives of the program or course, have little comprehension of the institutions or departments attitude regarding grades, absences, or varying teaching methodologies, and spend less time with students because they have no office space. This means, in effect, that vast numbers of students, mostly those attending evenings, weekends, and at distant sites where FTF do not regularly teach, are being taught by faculty who have little or no supervision by the designers of the curriculum though they may have some guidance from administrators. Is this bad?

Standards established by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges in 1988 state that off-campus programs "...are integral parts of the institution and maintain the same academic standards as regular campus programs." (WASC Handbook of Accreditation, 1988).This same document requires that full-time

faculty "...be involved, including providing physical presence and participation in instruction, in a manner determined by the institution...".These standards have been accepted by over 140 institutions in this accreditation region, and, while not all Associations have adopted like standards, those in the New England and Southern region reflect a similar attitude. The WASC Commission is more prescriptive and expects that the institution take full responsibility for the off-campus program and that it reflect academic quality comparable to that on campus. The same standard applies, obviously, to all on-campus courses taught by non-regular full-time faculty. The Commission also notes that all necessary information resources required for the programs are the responsibility of the institution and that the FTF, through the supervision required, oversee this need. Most instruction taught by PTF would fall under the above restrictions imposed by the Commission.

It would seem clear from the above that the majority of college students in the foreseeable future will be adults. It also seems clear that they will be taking their instruction most of the time from part-time faculty at continuing education centers, distant sites from a campus, at places of work, and via distant learning technologies. It also seems clear that accreditation associations are developing standards that require institutions to monitor the quality of off-campus programs to ensure that they are comparable to those delivered on campus. If this monitoring of academic quality becomes focused more on the need for faculty involvement in such programs as opposed to administrative control, the need to incorporate this responsibility into faculty roles and responsibilities becomes obvious.

Important issues regarding academic quality are involved: the full-time faculty who design the curriculum establish the goals and objectives of the program; they also determine program and course requirements, texts, bibliographic and information resources, project assignments, grading procedures, and, in some instances, teaching techniques. While administrators can distribute information to PTF about these matters, the nature and context of the discussions that brought them into existence can only be conveyed by the faculty. It is also questionable whether or not administrative personnel should be conveying academic matters to PTF when enrollment needs and budget requirements could be influencing or convey the appearance of influencing how that information is presented. The Western Association has clearly determined that full-time faculty should be the ones responsible for these academic quality matters. As the importance of the significant role being played by PTF becomes more and more obvious (They already

outnumber FTF across the nation), the probability for tighter quality controls will mount.

Should academic management of programs wherever delivered become the responsibility of full-time faculty, the way in which this gets included in workloads becomes important. In addition, the significance of this responsibility has to be included in the promotion and tenure process. On the face of it, such academic administrative responsibility could be incorporated into the "college service" category already existent in Promotion/Tenure considerations. However, the issue is complex enough that some may feel uncomfortable placing it there.

The University of La Verne, a mid-size comprehensive university in Southern California, delivers degree programs to adult sites in California, at military bases in California and Alaska, and at centers in Naples and Athens. In complying with the WASC guidelines, it has created a system of academic control that places responsibility for its academic programs in the hands of the full-time faculty. These responsibilities are incorporated either into the regular workload by replacing teaching assignments, by extending contracts to 12 months, or by a stipend payment determined by the size of the program.

In addition, a number of new faculty contracted positions have been created to oversee the more distant sites or those with enrollments not able to support regular faculty assignment. These new positions -- Faculty Liaison at centers, Senior lecturers, and Department Associates -- work with full-time faculty who act as Program Chairs and Subject Specialists. Program Chairs manage specific degree programs working with full-time faculty who monitor the degrees and with the PTF who teach in the program. Subject Specialists are responsible for overseeing the subject courses (e.g. accounting) that are included in the programs. They, too, work with PTF on academic matters related to texts, course objectives, exams, grading, etc..

Responsibilities include travel to the sites to meet with PTF, to work with site Directors, to do "collegial Reviews," and to talk to students. All of the above activity is monitored by the Quality Assurance Office operating out of the VPAA office. A Quality Management Manual provides guidance for the system and a complete log of all interaction between central campus and the University's centers is recorded. The effect of this process has been to address the accreditation concerns mentioned above as it creates faculty teams that, in effect, control the

academic programs and empower faculty to continually review the quality of the programs.

While this is one model that attempts to address the concerns of the accreditation associations for quality control of off-campus programs and courses taught by PTF, it is not the only way to meet these concerns. Yet it is obvious that management of the enormous population teaching on a part time basis throughout the country will require that full-time faculty workloads be altered or that more full-time faculty are hired to absorb the responsibility. In either case, some attention has to be given to this set of responsibilities in the dialogue that is current about faculty workloads. At present, it does not seem to be a major part of the discussion.